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COMEDY
OF
THE MINOR.

BY SAMUEL FOOTE, ESQ.

ADAPTED FOR THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION,

As performed at the Theatres-Royal
COVENT-GARDEN AND DRURY-LANE.

Regulated from the Prompt Books,

By Permission of the Managers.

WITH THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR;

AND A CRITIQUE,

By R. CUMBERLAND, Esq.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas are omitted
in the Representation.

Cooke's Edition.



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TO HIS GRACE
WILLIAM, DUKE OF DEVONSHIRE,

Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's Household.

MY LORD,

THE MINOR, who is indebted for his appearance on the stage to your Grace's indulgence, begs leave to desire your farther protection, at his entering into the world.

Though the allegiance due from the whole dramatic people to your Grace's station, might place this address in the light of a natural tribute; yet, my Lord, I should not have taken that liberty with the Duke of Devonshire, if I could not at the same time plead some little utility in the design of my piece; and add, that the public approbation has stamped a value on the execution.

The law, which threw the Stage under the absolute government of a Lord Chamberlain, could not fail to fill the minds of all the objects of that power with very gloomy apprehensions; they found themselves (through their own licentiousness, it must be confessed) in a more precarious dependent state, than any other of his Majesty's subjects. But when their direction was lodged in the hands of a nobleman, whose ancestors had so successfully struggled for national liberty, they ceased to fear for their own. It was not from a patron of the liberal arts they were to expect an oppressor; it was not from the friend of freedom and of man, they were to dread partial monopolies, or the establishment of petty tyrannies.

Their warmest wishes are accomplished; none of their rights have been invaded, except what, without the first poetic authority, I should not venture to call a right, the *Jus Nocendi*.

Your tenderness, my Lord, for all the followers of the Muses, has been in no instance more conspicuous, than in your late favour to me, the meanest of your train; your Grace has thrown open, for those who are denied admittance into the palaces of Parnassus, a cottage on its borders, where the unhappy migrants may be, if not magnificently, at least hospitably entertained.

I shall detain your Grace no longer, than just to echo the public voice, that, for the honour, progress, and perfection of letters, your Grace may long continue their candid CENSOR, who have always been their generous protector.

I have the honour, my Lord, to be, with the greatest respect, and gratitude,

Your Grace's most dutiful,

Most obliged,

And obedient Servant,

SAMUEL FOOTE.



LIFE OF SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

THIS well-known author was born at Truro in Cornwall, but in what year I know not. His father, John Foote, enjoyed the posts of commissioner of the prize office and fine contract. His mother was heiress of the Dineley and Goodere families; and to her, the Dineley estate, which was of great value, descended, in consequence of an unhappy and fatal quarrel between her two brothers, Sir John Dineley Goodere, Bart. and Sir Samuel Goodere, Captain of his Majesty's ship the Ruby, which terminated in the loss of life to both. Foote received his education at Worcester College, formerly Gloucester-Hall, Oxon. From the University he was removed to the Temple, being designed for the study of the law; in which it is most probable that his great oratorical talents, powers of mimicry and humour, would have shewn themselves in a very conspicuous light. The gravity of this study not suiting the more volatile vivacity of his disposition, he chose rather to employ those talents in a sphere of action to which they seemed better adapted, and went on the stage: the repeated proofs he received of the public approbation bear the strongest testimonials to his merit. His first appearance was in the part of Othello; but he soon struck out into a new and untrodden path, by taking on himself the double character of author and performer, in which light, in 1747, he opened the little theatre in the Haymarket, with a dramatic piece of his own writing, called *The Diversions of the Morning*. This piece consisted of nothing more than the introduction of several well-known characters in real life; whose manner of conversation and expression this author had very happily hit in the diction of his drama, and still more happily represented on the stage by an exact and most amazing imitation, not only of the manner and tone of voice, but even of the very persons, of those whom he intended to *take off*. In the latter part of his piece, under the character of a theatrical director,

this gentleman took off with great humour and accuracy the several styles of acting of every principal performer of the English stage.

This performance at first met with some little opposition from the civil magistrates of Westminster, under the sanction of the act of parliament for limiting the number of play-houses. But the author being patronized by many of the principal nobility and others, this opposition was over-ruled, and, with an alteration of the title of his piece to that of Mr. Foote's *giving Tea to his Friends*, he proceeded without farther molestation, and represented it through a run of upwards of forty mornings, to crowded and splendid audiences.

The ensuing season he produced another piece of the same kind, which he called *An Auction of Pictures*. This piece had also a very great run.

Neither of the above-mentioned pieces have yet appeared in print, nor would they perhaps give any very great pleasure in the closet; for, consisting principally of characters whose peculiar singularities could never be perfectly represented in print, they might probably appear flat and insipid, when divested of that strong colouring which Mr. Foote had given them in his personal representation; for it may not be improper to observe in this place, that he represented all the principal characters in each piece, which stood in need of his mimic powers to execute, shifting from one to another with all the dexterity of a Proteus. He now, however, proceeded to pieces of somewhat more dramatic regularity, his *Knights* being the produce of an ensuing season. Yet in this also, though his plot and characters seemed less immediately personal, it was apparent that he kept some particular personages strongly in his mind in the performance. It would be superfluous in this place to enumerate the course of this gentleman's dramatic progress as to all the respective pieces which he has since written and performed. Let it here suffice therefore to observe, that he continued from time to time to entertain the public, by selecting for their use such characters, as well

general as individual, as seemed most likely to contribute to the exciting our laughter.

The following is a list of his performances :

1. *Taste*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1752.
2. *The Englishman in Paris*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1753.
3. *The Knights*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1754.
4. *The Englishman returned from Paris*. A Farce. 8vo. 1756.
5. *The Author*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1757.
6. *The Diversions of the Morning*. A Farce. 1758. Not printed.
7. *The Minor*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1760.
8. *The Lyar*. A Comedy. 1761. Printed 8vo. 1764.
9. *The Orators*. 8vo. 1762.
10. *The Mayor of Garratt*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1763.
11. *The Patron*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1764.
12. *The Commissary*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1765.
13. *Prelude*, on opening the theatre, 1767.
14. *Devil upon Two Sticks*. A Comedy. 1768. Printed 8vo. 1778.
15. *The Lame Lover*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1770.
16. *The Maid of Bath*. A Comedy. 1771. Printed 8vo. 1778.
17. *The Nabob*. A Comedy. 1772. Printed 8vo. 1778.
18. *Piety in Pattens*. A Farce. 1773. Not printed.
19. *The Bankrupt*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1773.
20. *The Cozeners*. A Comedy. 1774. Printed 8vo. 1778.
21. *The Capuchin*. A Comedy. 1776. Printed 8vo. 1778.
22. *A Trip to Calais*. A Comedy. 8vo. 1778.

Besides these pieces, Mr. Foote suffered his name to be put to a work, entitled, *The Comic Theatre*, in 5 vols. 12mo. being a translation of a number of French comedies. Of these, however, we are assured the first only, viz. *The Young Hypocrite*, is to be ascribed to him. The following is a list of them :

Vol. 1. *The Young Hypocrite*, *The Spendthrift*, *The Triple Marriage*.

Vol. 2. *The Imaginary Obstacle*, *The Sisters*, *The Libertine*, or *The Hidden Treasure*.

Vol. 3. *The Legacy*, or *The Fortune Hunter*; *The Generous Artifice*, or *The Reformed Rake*; *The Whimsical Lovers*, or *The Double Infidelity*.

Vol. 4. *The Blunderer*, *The Amorous Quarrel*, *The Concited Ladies*, *The Forced Marriage*.

Vol. 5. *The Man Hater*; *The Faggot-binder*, or *The Mock Doctor*, *The Gentleman Cil*.

To proceed with Mr. Foote's history. From the year 1752 to 1761, he continued to perform at one of the theatres every season, generally for a stated number of nights; and on these engagements he usually

brought out a new piece. In this course he went on until a very pressing embarrassment in his affairs compelled him to perform *The Minor* at the Hay-Market in the summer of the year 1760, with such a company as he could hastily collect. The success of this attempt seems to have suggested to him the scheme of occupying that theatre when the others were shut up; and from the year 1762, until the season before his death, he regularly performed there, and acquired a very considerable income, which he expended as fast as it came into his possession, being both generous and extravagant. In February 1766, he had the misfortune to fall from his horse while at Lord Mexborough's seat in the country on a visit. It is generally supposed that this accident facilitated his application for a patent, which he obtained on the 9th of July in the same year. As he was ever attentive to such temporary circumstances as would afford subjects of ridicule, so he was not at all scrupulous whom he offended in his satirical career. In 1776, he drew a character intended for a lady of quality, then much talked of, who had influence enough to obtain a prohibition to his play being represented, and in the controversy which this incident occasioned, some imputations were thrown out against his character too gross to be recorded, and of too vile a nature to be believed without the clearest evidence. This dispute had hardly subsided, when a legal charge was made against him for an offence similar to that before alluded to; and it is but justice to his memory to declare, that the accusation was generally supposed to have originated in malice, and that he was acquitted by the direction, and agreeably to the sentiments of the judge who tried him, after a very long and strict investigation of all the circumstances of the affair. The shock which he received from this disgraceful situation is supposed to have had a fatal effect upon him. A few months afterwards he was seized, while on the stage, with a paralytic fit, from which he recovered sufficiently to spend the summer at Brighthelmstone, and

from thence, on the approach of winter, was advised to remove to France. On the 20th of October, 1777, he arrived at Dover, intending immediately to proceed to Calais. But about eleven o'clock next morning he complained of a shivering, and went to bed, where he was seized with another fit, which lasted three hours; after it was over he lay very composed, and seemed inclined to sleep; in a few minutes he began to breathe in a moaning tone, and at length fetched a deep sigh, and expired. He was buried in Westminster-Abbey.

Mr. Foote's dramatic works are all to be ranked among the *petites pieces* of the theatre, as he never attempted any thing which attained the bulk of the more perfect drama. In the execution of them they are sometimes loose, negligent, and unfinished, seeming rather to be the hasty productions of a man of genius, whose Pegasus, though endued with fire, has no inclination for fatigue, than the laboured finishings of a profest dramatist aiming at immortality. His plots are somewhat irregular, and their catastrophes not always conclusive or perfectly wound up. Yet, with all these little deficiencies, it must be confessed that they contain more of one essential property of comedy, viz. strong character, than the writings of any other of our modern authors; and although the diction of his dialogue may not, from the general tenor of his subjects, either require, or admit of, the wit of a Congreve, or the elegance of an Etheredge; yet it is constantly embellished with numberless strokes of keen satire, and touches of temporary humour, such as only the clearest judgment and deepest discernment could dictate; and though the language spoken by his characters may at first sight seem not the most accurate and correct, yet it will, on a closer examination, be found entirely dramatical, as it contains numbers of those natural minutiae of expression, on which the very basis of character is frequently founded, and which render it the truest mirror of the conversation of the times he wrote in.

It has been objected against Mr. Foote, that the in-

troduction of real characters on the stage was not only ungenerous, but cruel and unjust; and that the rendering any person the object of public ridicule and laughter, was doing him the most essential injury possible. Yet I cannot think this charge so strong as the vehement opponents of mimicry would have it appear. Mr. Foote, in his *Minor*, has very properly distinguished who are the proper objects of ridicule, and the legal victims to the lash of satire; that is to say, those who appear what they are not, or would be what they cannot. When hypocrisy and dissimulation would lay snares for the fortunes, or contaminate the principles of mankind, it is surely but justice to the world to withdraw the mask, and shew their natural faces with the distortions and shocking deformities they are really possessed of. And when affectation or singularity overbear the more valuable parts of any person's character, and render those disagreeable and wearisome companions, who, divested of those characteristic foibles, might be valuable, sensible, and entertaining members of the community, it is themselves surely who act the ridiculous part on the more extensive stage of the world; and it should rather be deemed an act of kindness both to the persons themselves and their acquaintance, to set up such a mirror before them, as by pointing out to themselves their absurd peculiarities (and who is without some?) affords them an opportunity, by amendment, to destroy the resemblance, and so avoid the ridicule. Nor can I help being of opinion, that an author of this kind in some respects is more useful to the age he lives in, than those who only range abroad into the various scenes of life for general character. And although Mr. Foote's dramatic pieces may not perhaps have the good fortune to attain immortality, or be perfectly relished by the audiences of a future age, yet I cannot deny him here the justice of bearing strong testimony to his merits, and ranking him among the first of modern dramatists.

THE EDITOR.

CRITIQUE

ON

THE MINOR.

WE may say of Foote's *Minor*, as Samuel Johnson said of Garrick's Ode on Shakspeare, that it *eludes criticism*; we will not therefore attempt to apply it: the undefinable humour in which it abounds, like the volatile spirit of certain essences, flies off and will not submit to be analyzed. He has, however, given something like a body to this vapour of his brain, something that has the shape of a plot, which, wild and chimerical as it is, has a moral inference at the service of the reader, if he chooses to advert to it: this is one amongst the various duties of an author, of which it is confessed this eccentric wit was not very studious, but it seems to have occurred to him here not only in *his Introduction*, where he speaks in person, but in the project of his drama itself, where he dictates through his Muse.

Foote was a well-born gentleman and a well educated scholar, and when his necessities had put him upon those resources, to which nature and his genius so peculiarly had disposed him, he still wanted that strength of nerve and intrepidity of character, which are essential to an author, who professedly undertakes to be the representative of his own avowed personalities. Impelled by talents for ridicule, such as probably no man ever possessed, to adventures of this hazard, he appears to have been aware of his danger, even in this comic sketch, although he had only singled out an old bawd, a prating auctioneer, and a methodist field-preacher, as the butts of his satire; for he takes serious pains in his introduction by appealing to his audience before hand, and asking them in self-defence "where they can have recourse but to the "Comic Muse, the archness and severity of whose "smile may redress an evil, that the laws cannot "reach, or reason reclaim." Now, as no man knew better than he did, how easily men are reconciled to any

thing that entertains them, this over solicitude to apologize for personalities, marks that sensibility and apprehension of rebuke, which could only be overcome by a passion for applause that was inordinate, and a propensity to ridicule that he never could resist.

I will not pretend to understand the exact criterions and component qualities of what may be called *wit*, properly so defined; but speaking only as I feel, I cannot recollect that scene in any play, or comic passage in any author, whose language I am master of, that I think comparable with that of Mrs. Cole in the first instance, and also with that of Smirk the auctioneer, in the second act. The impression they originally made on me is yet so fresh in my recollection, that if I rate them above their merit, it is an error of so long standing, that it is now too late to reform it.

C.



Dramatis Personæ.

PERSONS IN THE INTRODUCTION.

FOOTE.

CANKER.

SMART.

PEARSE.

IN THE COMEDY.

Sir WILLIAM WEALTHY.

Mr. RICHARD WEALTHY.

Sir GEORGE WEALTHY.

SHIFT.

LOADER.

DICK.

TRANSFER.

SMIRK.

Mrs. COLE.

LUCY.

INTRODUCTION.

Enter CANKER and SMART.

Smart. BUT are you sure he has leave?

Cank. Certain.

Smart. I'm damn'd glad on't. For now we shall have a laugh either with him, or at him, it does not signify which.

Cank. Not a farthing.

Smart. D'you know his scheme?

Cank. Not I.—But is not the door of the Little Theatre open?

Smart. Yes.—Who is that fellow that seems to stand centry there?

Cank. By his tatter'd garb and meagre visage, he must be one of the troop.

Smart. I'll call him.—Halloo, Mr. —

Enter PEARSE.

What, is there any thing going on over the way?

Pearse. A rehearsal.

Smart. Of what?

Pearse. A new piece.

Smart. Foote's?

Pearse. Yes.

Cank. Is he there?

Pearse. He is.

Smart. Zounds, let us go and see what he is about.

Cank. With all my heart.

Smart. Come along then. [Exit.

Enter FOOTE, and an Actor.

Foote. Sir, this will never do; you must get rid of your high notes and country cant. Oh, 'tis the true strolling—

Enter SMART and CANKER.

Smart. Ha, ha, ha! what hard at it, my boy!—Here's your old friend Canker and I come for a peep. Well, and hey, what is your plan?

Foote. Plan!

Smart. Ay, what afe your characters? Give us your groupe; how is your cloth fill'd?

* E

Foote. Characters!

Smart. Ay.—Come, come, communicate. What, man, we will lend thee a lift. I have a damn'd fine original for thee, an aunt of my own, just come from the North, with the true Newcastle bur in her throat, and a nose and a chin—I am afraid she is not well enough known; but I have a remedy for that. I'll bring her the first night of your piece, place her in a conspicuous station, and whisper the secret to the whole house, that will be damn'd fine, won't it?

Foote. Oh, delicious!

Smart. But don't name me. For if she smokes me for the author, I shall be dash'd out of her codicil in a hurry.

Foote. Oh, never fear me. But I should think your uncle Tom a better character.

Smart. What, the politician?

Foote. Aye; that every day after dinner, as soon as the cloth is removed, fights the battle of Minden, batters the French with cherry-stones, and pursues them to the banks of the Rhine in a stream of spilt port.

Smart. Oh, damn it, he'll do.

Foote. Or what say you to your father-in-law, Sir Timothy; who, though as broken-winded as a Hounslow post-horse, is eternally chaunting Venetian ballads. *Kata tore cara higlia.*

Smart. Admirable, by Heavens!—Have you got 'em?

Foote. No.

Smart. Then in with 'em, my boy.

Foote. Not one.

Smart. Pr'ythee, why not?

Foote. Why look'e, Smart, though you are, in the language of the world, my friend; yet there is one thing you, I am sure, love better than any body.

Smart. What's that?

Foote. Mischief.

Smart. No, pr'ythee—

Foote. How now am I sure that you, who so rea-

dily give up your relations, may not have some design upon me?

Smart. I don't understand you.

Footle. Why as soon as my characters begin to circulate a little successfully, my mouth is stopped in a minute, by the clamour of your relations.—Oh, damme,—'tis a shame, it should not be,—people of distinction brought upon the stage.—And so out of compliment to your cousins, I am to be beggared for treating the public with the follies of your family at your own request.

Smart. How can you think I would be such a dog? What the devil then, are we to have nothing personal? Give us the actors, however.

Footle. Oh, that's stale. Besides, I think they have, of all men, the best right to complain.

Smart. How so?

Footle. Because, by rendering them ridiculous in their profession, you at the same time injure their pockets.—Now, as to the other gentry, they have providentially something besides their understanding to rely upon; and the only injury they can receive, is,—that the whole town is then diverted with what before was only the amusement of private parties.

Cank. Give us then a national portrait: a Scotchman or an Irishman.

Footle. If you mean merely the dialect of the two countries, I can't think it either a subject of satire or humour; it is an accidental unhappiness, for which a man is no more accountable, than for the colour of his hair. Now affectation I take to be the true comic object. If, indeed, a North Briton, struck with a scheme of reformation, should advance from the banks of the Tweed; to teach the English the true pronunciation of their own language, he would, I think, merit your laughter: nor would a Dublin mechanic, who, from heading the Liberty-boys, in a skirmish on Ormond Quay, should think he had a right to prescribe military laws to the first commander in Europe, be a less ridiculous object,

Smart. Are there such?

Foote. If you mean that the blunders of a few peasants, or the partial principles of a single scoundrel, are to stand as characteristic marks of a whole country, your pride may produce a laugh, but, believe me, it is at the expence of your understanding.

Cank. Hey-day! what a system is here! Laws for laughing!—And pray, sage sir, instruct us when we may laugh with propriety?

Foote. At an old beau, a superannuated beauty, a military coward, a stuttering orator, or a gouty dancer. In short, whoever affects to be what he is not, or strives to be what he cannot, is an object worthy the poet's pen and your mirth.

Smart. Psha, I don't know what you mean by your is nots and cannots—Damn'd abstruse jargon—Ha, Canker!

Cank. Well, but if you will not give us persons, let us have things. Treat us with a modern amour, and a state intrigue, or a——

Foote. And so amuse the public ear at the expence of private peace. You must excuse me.

Cank. And with these principles, you expect to thrive on this spot?

Smart. No, no, it won't do. I tell thee the plain roast and boiled of the theatres will never do at this table. We must have high-seasoned *ragoûts*, and rich sauces.

Foote. Why, perhaps, by way of desert, I may produce something that may hit your palate.

Smart. Your bill of fare?

Foote. What think you of one of those itinerant field orators, who, though at declared enmity with common sense, have the address to poison the principles, and at the same time pick the pockets of half our industrious fellow-subjects?

Cank. Have a care. Dangerous ground, *ludere cum sacris*, you know.

Foote. Now I look upon it in a different manner. I consider these gentlemen in the light of public per-

formers, like myself; and whether we exhibit at Tottenham-court, or the Hay-market, our purpose is the same, and the place is immaterial.

Cank. Why, indeed, if it be considered——

Foote. Nay, more, I must beg leave to assert, that ridicule is the only antidote against this pernicious poison. This is a madness that argument can never cure: and should a little wholesome severity be applied, persecution would be the immediate cry: where then can we have recourse, but to the comic muse? Perhaps the archness and severity of her smile may redress an evil that the laws cannot reach, or reason reclaim.

Cank. Why, if it does not cure those already dis-tempered, it may be a means to stop the infection.

Smart. But how is your scheme conducted?

Foote. Of that you may judge. We are just going upon a repetition of the piece.—I should be glad to have your opinion.

Smart. We will give it you.

Foote. One indulgence: As you are Englishmen, I think, I need not beg, that as from necessity most of my performers are new, you will allow for their inexperience, and encourage their timidity.

Smart. But reasonable.

Foote. Come then, prompter, begin.

Pearse. Lord, sir, we are all at a stand.

Foote. What's the matter?

Pearse. Mrs. O'Schohnesy has returned the part of the bawd; she says she is a gentlewoman, and it would be a reflection on her family to do any such thing!

Foote. Indeed!

Pearse. If it had been only a whore, says she, I should not have minded it; because no lady need be ashamed of doing that.

Foote. Well, there is no help for it; but these gentlemen must not be disappointed. Well, I'll do the character myself. [Exeunt.]

THE MINOR.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Sir WILLIAM WEALTHY, and Mr. RICHARD WEALTHY.

Sir William. Come, come, brother, I know the world. People who have their attention eternally fixed upon one object, can't help being a little narrow in their notions.

R. Weal. A sagacious remark that, and highly probable, that we merchants, who maintain a constant correspondence with the four quarters of the world, should know less of it than your fashionable fellows, whose whole experience is bounded by Westminster-bridge.

Sir Will. Nay, brother, as a proof that I am not blind to the benefit of travelling, George, you know, has been in Germany these four years.

R. Weal. Where he is well grounded in gaming and gluttony; France has furnished him with fawning and flattery; Italy equipp'd him with capriols and cantatas: and thus accomplished, my young gentleman is returned with a cargo of whores, cooks, valets de.chambres, and fiddlesticks, a most valuable member of the British commonwealth.

Sir Will. You dislike then my system of education?

R. Weal. Most sincerely.

Sir Will. The whole?

R. Weal. Every particular.

Sir Will. The early part, I should imagine, might merit your approbation.

R. Weal. Least of all. What, I suppose, because he has run the gauntlet through a public school, where, at sixteen, he had practised more vices than he would otherwise have heard of at sixty.

Sir Will. Ha, ha, prejudice!

R. Weal. Then, indeed, you removed him to the University; where, lest his morals should be mended, and his understanding improved, you fairly set him free from the restraint of the one, and the drudgery

of the other, by the privileged distinction of a silk gown and a velvet cap.

Sir Will. And all these evils, you think, a city education would have prevented?

R. Weal. Doubtless.—Proverbs, proverbs, brother William, convey wholesome instruction. Idleness is the root of all evil. Regular hours, constant employment, and good example, can't fail to form the mind.

Sir Will. Why, truly, brother, had you stuck to your old civic vices, hypocrisy, cozenage, and avarice, I don't know whether I might not have committed George to your care; but you cockneys now beat us suburbanians at our own weapons. What, old boy, times are changed since the date of thy indentures; when the sleek, crop-eared 'prentice used to dangle after his mistress, with the great bible under his arm, to St. Bride's, on a Sunday, bring home the text, repeat the divisions of the discourse, dine at twelve, and regale upon a gaudy day with buns and beer at Islington or Mile End.

R. Weal. Wonderfully facetious!

Sir Will. Our modern lads are of a different metal. They have their gaming clubs in the Garden, their little lodgings, the snug depositories of their rusty swords, and occasional bag-wigs; their horses for the turf; ay, and their commissions of bankruptcy too, before they are well out of their time.

R. Weal. Infamous aspersion!

Sir Will. But the last meeting at Newmarket, Lord Losty received at the hazard-table the identical note from the individual taylor to whom he had paid it but the day before, for a new set of liveries.

R. Weal. Invention!

Sir Will. These are anecdotes you will never meet with in your weekly travels from Cateaton street to your boarded box in Clapham, brother.

R. Weal. And yet that boarded box, as your prodigal spendthrift proceeds, will soon be the only seat of the family.

Sir Will. May be not. Who knows what a reformation our project may produce!

R. Weal. I do. None at all.

Sir Will. Why so?

R. Weal. Because your means are ill-proportioned to their end. Were he my son, I would serve him—

Sir Will. As you have done your daughter—discard him. But consider, I have but one.

R. Weal. That would weigh nothing with me: for, was Charlotte to set up a will of her own, and reject the man of my choice, she must expect to share the fate of her sister. I consider families as a smaller kind of kingdoms, and would have disobedience in the one as severely punished as rebellion in the other. Both cut off from their respective societies.

Sir Will. Poor Lucy! But surely you begin to relent. Mayn't I intercede?

R. Weal. Look'e, brother, you know my mind. I will be absolute. If I meddle with the management of your son, it is at your own request; but if, directly or indirectly, you interfere with my banishment of that wilful, headstrong, disobedient hussy, all ties between us are broke; and I shall no more remember you as a brother, than I do her as a child.

Sir Will. I have done. But to return: you think there is a probability in my plan?

R. Weal. I shall attend the issue.

Sir Will. You will lend your aid, however?

R. Weal. We shall see how you go on.

Enter Servant.

Serv. A letter, sir.

Sir Will. Oh, from Capias, my attorney. Who brought it?

Serv. The person is without, sir.

Sir Will. Bid him wait. [*Reads.*] [*Exit Serv.*]

‘ WORTHY SIR,

‘ The bearer is the person I promised to procure.
‘ I thought it was proper for you to examine him in
‘ *viva voce*. So if you administer a few interrogatories,
‘ you will find, by cross-questioning him, whether he

' is a competent person to prosecute the cause you wot
' of. I wish you a speedy issue: and as there can be
' no default in your judgment, am of opinion it should
' be carried into immediate execution. I am,

' Worthy Sir, &c.

' TIMOTHY CAPIAS.

' P. S. The party's name is Samuel Shift. He is
' an admirable mime, or mimic, and most delectable
' company; as we experience every Tuesday night at
' our club, the Magpye and Horse-shoe, Fetter-lane.
Very methodical indeed, Mr. Capias!—John——

Enter Servant.

Bid the person who brought this letter walk in.
[*Exit Servant.*] Have you any curiosity, brother?

R. Wealth. Not a jot. I must to the Change. In
the evening you may find me in the counting-house,
or at Jonathan's. [*Exit R. Wealthy.*]

Sir Will. You shall hear from me.

Enter SHIFT and Servant.

Shut the door, John, and remember I am not at
home. [*Exit Serv.*] You came from Mr. Capias?

Shift. I did, sir.

Sir Will. Your name, I think, is Shift?

Shift. It is, sir.

Sir Will. Did Mr. Capias drop any hint of my bu-
siness with you?

Shift. None. He only said, with his spectacles on
his nose, and his hand upon his chin, Sir William
Wealthy is a respectable personage, and my client!
he wants to retain you in a certain affair, and will
open the case, and give you your brief himself: if
you adhere to his instructions, and carry your cause,
he is generous, and will discharge your bill without
taxation.

Sir Will. Ha, ha! my friend Capias to a hair!
Well, sir, this is no bad specimen of your abilities.
But see that the door is fast. Now, sir, you are to—

Shift. A moment's pause, if you please. You must
know, Sir William, I am a prodigious admirer of
forms. Now Mr. Capias tells me, that it is always

the rule to administer a retaining fee before you enter upon the merits.

Sir Will. Oh, sir, I beg your pardon!

Shift. Not that I question your generosity; but forms, you know——

Sir Will. No apology, I beg. But, as we are to have a closer connection, it may not be amiss, by way of introduction, to understand one another a little. Pray, sir, where was you born?

Shift. At my father's.

Sir Will. Hum!——And what was he?

Shift. A gentleman.

Sir Will. What was you bred?

Shift. A gentleman.

Sir Will. How do you live?

Shift. Like a gentleman.

Sir Will. Could nothing induce you to unbosom yourself?

Shift. Look'e, Sir William, there is a kind of something in your countenance, a certain openness and generosity, a *je ne sçai quò*i in your manner, that I will unlock. You shall see me all.

Sir Will. You will oblige me.

Shift. You must know then, that Fortune, which frequently delights to raise the noblest structures from the simplest foundations; who from a taylor made a pope, from a gin-shop an empress, and many a prime minister from nothing at all, has thought fit to raise me to my present height, from the humble employment of Light your Honour—a link boy.

Sir Will. A pleasant fellow.—Who were your parents?

Shift. I was produced, sir, by a left-handed marriage, in the language of the news-papers, between an illustrious lamp-lighter and an eminent itinerant cat and dog butcher—Cat's meat, and dog's meat—I dare say, you have heard my mother, sir. But as to this happy pair I owe little besides my being, I shali drop them where they dropt me—in the street.

Sir Will. Proceed.

Shift. My first knowledge of the world I owe to a school which has produced many a great man—the avenues of the play-house. There, sir, leaning on my extinguished link, I learned dexterity from pick-pockets, connivance from constables, politics and fashions from footmen, and the art of making and breaking a promise with their masters. Here, sirrah, light me across the kennel—I hope your honour will remember poor Jack—You ragged rascal, I have no halfpence—I'll pay you the next time I see you—But, lack-a-day, sir, that time I saw as seldom as his tradesmen.

Sir Will. Very well.

Shift. To these accomplishments from without the theatre, I must add one that I obtained within.

Sir Will. How did you gain admittance there?

Shift. My merit, sir, that, like my link, threw a radiance round me.—A detachment from the head quarters here took possession, in the summer, of a country corporation, where I did the honours of the barn, by sweeping the stage and clipping the candles. There my skill and address was so conspicuous, that it procured me the same office, the ensuing winter, at Drury-Lane, where I acquired intrepidity, the crown of all my virtues.

Sir Will. How did you obtain that?

Shift. By my post. For I think, sir, he that dares stand the shot of the gallery in lighting, snuffing, and sweeping, the first night of a new play, may bid defiance to the pillory, with all its customary compliments.

Sir Will. Some truth in that.

Shift. But an unlucky crab-apple, applied to my right eye by a patriot gingerbread-baker from the Borough, who would not suffer three dancers from Switzerland because he hated the French, forced me to a precipitate retreat.

Sir Will. Poor devil!

Shift. Broglie and Contades have done the same. But as it happened, like a tennis-ball, I rose higher than the rebound.

Sir Will. How so?

Shift. My misfortune, sir, moved the compassion of one of our performers, a whimsical man; he took me into his service. To him I owe what I believe will make me useful to you.

Sir Will. Explain.

Shift. Why, sir, my master was remarkably happy in an art, which, however disesteemed at present, is, by Tully, reckoned amongst the perfections of an orator—mimicry.

Sir Will. Why you are deeply read, Mr. Shift!

Shift. A smattering—But as I was saying, sir, nothing came amiss to my master. Bipeds, or quadrupeds; rationals, or animals; from the clamour of the bar to the cackle of the barn-door; from the soporific twang of the tabernacle of Tottenham-Court, to the melodious bray of their long-eared brethren in Bunhill Fields; all were objects of his imitation, and my attention. In a word, sir, for two whole years, under this professor, I studied and starved, impoverished my body, and pampered my mind; till thinking myself pretty near equal to my master, I made him one of his own bows, and set up for myself.

Sir Will. You have been successful, I hope.

Shift. Pretty well, I can't complain. My art, sir, is a *pass-par-tout*. I seldom want employment. Let's see how stand my engagements. [*Pulls out a pocket-book.*] Hum—hum,—Oh! Wednesday at Mrs. Gammut's, near Hanover-square; there, there, I shall make a meal upon the Mingotti; for her ladyship is in the Opera interest; but, however, I shall revenge her cause upon her rival Mattei. Sunday evening at Lady Sustinuto's concert. Thursday I dine upon the actors, with ten Templars, at the Mitre in Fleet-street. Friday I am to give the amorous parly of two intriguing cats in a gutter, with the disturbing of a hen-roost, at Mr. Deputy Sugarsops, near the Monument. So, sir, you see my hands are full. In short, Sir William, there is not a buck or a turtle de-

voured within the bills of mortality, but there I may, if I please, stick a napkin under my chin.

Sir Will. I'm afraid, Mr. Shift, I must break in a little upon your engagements; but you shall not be a loser by the bargain.

Shift. Command me.

Sir Will. You can be secret as well as serviceable?

Shift. Mute as a mackarel.

Sir Will. Come hither then. If you betray me to my son——

Shift. Scalp me.

Sir Will. Enough.—You must know then, the hopes of our family are, Mr. Shift, centered in one boy.

Shift. And I warrant he is a hopeful one.

Sir Will. No interruption, I beg. George has been abroad these four years; and from his late behaviour I have reason to believe, that had a certain event happened, which I am afraid he wished,—my death——

Shift. Yes; that's natural enough.

Sir Will. Nay, pray,—there would soon be an end to an ancient and honourable family.

Shift. Very melancholy indeed. But families, like besoms, will wear to the stumps, and finally fret out, as you say.

Sir Will. Pr'ythee, peace for five minutes.

Shift. I am tongue-ty'd.

Sir Will. Now I have projected a scheme to prevent this calamity.

Shift. Ay, I should be glad to hear that.

Sir Will. I am going to tell it you.

Shift. Proceed.

Sir Will. George, as I have contrived it, shall experience all the misery of real ruin, without running the least risque.

Shift. Ay, that will be a *coup de maitre*.

Sir Will. I have prevailed upon his uncle, a wealthy citizen——

Shift. I don't like a city plot.

Sir Will. I tell thee it is my own.

Shift. I beg pardon.

Sir Will. My brother, I say, some time since wrote him a circumstantial account of my death; upon which he is returned, in full expectation of succeeding to my estate.

Shift. Immediately.

Sir Will. No; when at age. In about three months.

Shift. I understand you.

Sir Will. Now, sir, guessing into what hands my heedless boy would naturally fall, on his return, I have, in a feigned character, associated myself with a set of rascals, who will spread every bait that can flatter folly, inflame extravagance, allure inexperience, or catch credulity. And when by their means, he thinks himself reduced to the last extremity; lost even to the most distant hope.

Shift. What then?

Sir Will. Then will I step in like his guardian-angel, and snatch him from perdition. If, mortified by misery, he becomes conscious of his errors, I have saved my son; but if, on the other hand, gratitude can't bind, nor ruin reclaim him, I will cast him out as an alien to my blood, and trust for the support of my name and family to a remoter branch.

Shift. Bravely resolved. But what part am I to sustain in this drama?

Sir Will. Why George, you are to know, is already stript of what money he could command by two sharpers: but as I never trust them out of my sight, they can't deceive me.

Shift. Out of your sight!

Sir Will. Why, I tell thee, I am one of the knot: an adept in their science, can slip, shuffle, cog, or cut with the best of them.

Shift. How do you escape your son's notice?

Sir Will. His firm persuasion of my death, with the extravagance of my disguise.—Why, I would engage to elude your penetration, when I am beau'd out for the baron. But of that by and by. He has

recourse, after his ill success, to the cent. per cent. gentry, the usurers, for a further supply.

Shift. Natural enough.

Sir Will. Pray do you know—I forget his name—a wrinkled old fellow, in a thread-bare coat? He sits every morning, from twelve till two, in the left corner of Lloyd's Coffee-house; and every evening, from five till eight, under the clock at the Temple Exchange.

Shift. What, little Transfer the broker!

Sir Will. The same. Do you know him?

Shift. Know him!—Ay, rot him. It was but last Easter Tuesday, he had me turned out at a feast, in Leather-Seller's Hall, for singing 'Room for Cuck-olds' like a parrot; and vowed it meant a reflection upon the whole body corporate.

Sir Will. You have reason to remember him.

Shift. Yes, yes, I recommended a minor to him myself, for the loan only of fifty pounds; and would you believe it, as I hope to be saved, we dined, supped, and wetted, five and thirty guineas upon tick, in meetings at the Cross-keys, in order to settle the terms; and after all the scoundrel would not lend us a stiver.

Sir Will. Could you personate him?

Shift. Him! Oh, you shall see me shift into his shamble in a minute: and, with a withered face, a bit of a purple nose, a cautionary stammer, and a sleek silver head, I would undertake to deceive even his banker. But to speak the truth, I have a friend that can do this inimitably well. Have not you something of more consequence for me.

Sir Will. I have.——Could not you, master Shift, assume another shape? You have attended auctions.

Shift. Auctions! a constant puff. Deep in the mystery: a professed *connoisseur*, from a Niger to a Nautilus, from the Apollo Belvidere to a Butterfly.

Sir Will. One of these insinuating, oily orators I will get you to personate: for we must have the plate and jewels in our possession, or they will soon fall into other hands.

Shift. I will do it.

Sir Will. Within I will give you farther instructions.

Shift. I will follow you.

Sir Will. [*Going, returns.*] You will want materials.

Shift. Oh, my dress I can be furnished with in five minutes. [*Exit Sir Will.*]—A whimsical old blade this. I shall laugh if this scheme miscarries. I have a strange mind to lend it a lift—never had a greater—Pho, a damned unnatural connection this of mine! What have I to do with fathers and guardians! a parcel of preaching, prudent, careful, curmudgeonly—dead to pleasures themselves, and the blasters of it in others.—Mere dogs in a manger—No, no, I'll veer, tack about, open my budget to the boy, and join in a counter-plot. But hold, hold, friend Stephen, see first how the land lies. Who knows whether this Germanized genius has parts to comprehend, or spirit to reward thy merit. There's danger in that, ay, marry is there. 'Egad, before I shift the helm, I'll first examine the coast; and then if there be but a bold shore, and a good bottom, have a care, old Square toes, you will meet with your match. [*Exit.*

Enter Sir GEORGE, LOADER, and Servant.

Sir Geo. Let the Martin pannels for the vis-a-vis be carried to Long-acre, and the pye-balls sent to Hall's to be bitted—You will give me leave to be in your debt till the evening, Mr. Loader.—I have just enough left to discharge the baron; and we must, you know, be punctual with him, for the credit of the country.

Load. Fire him, a snub-nosed son of a bitch. Lurch me, but he got enough last night to purchase a principality amongst his countrymen, the High Dutchians and Hussarians.

Sir Geo. You had your share, Mr. Loader.

Load. Who, I?—Lurch me at four, but I was marked to the top of your trick, by the baron, my dear. What, I am no cinque and quarter man. Come, shall we have a dip in the history of the Four Kings this morning?

Sir Geo. Rather too early. Besides, it is the rule abroad, never to engage afresh, till our old scores are discharged.

Load. Capot me, but those lads abroad are pretty fellows, let them say what they will. Here, sir, they will vow you from father to son, to the twentieth generation. They would as soon, now-a-days, pay a tradesman's bill, as a play debt. All sense of honour is gone, not a stiver stirring. They could as soon raise the dead as two pounds two; nick me, but I have a great mind to tie up, and ruin the rascals—What, has Transfer been here this morning?

Enter Dick.

Sir Geo. Any body here this morning, Dick?

Dick. No body, your honour.

Load. Repique the rascal. He promised to be here before me.

Dick. I beg your honour's pardon. Mrs. Cole from the Piazza was here, between seven and eight.

Sir Geo. An early hour for a lady of her calling.

Dick. Mercy on me! The poor gentlewoman is mortally altered since we used to lodge there, in our jaunts from Oxford; wrapt up in flannels; all over the rheumatise.

Load. Ay, ay, old Moll is at her last stake.

Dick. She bade me say, she just stopt in her way to the Tabernacle; after the exhortation, she says, she'll call again.

Sir Geo. Exhortation!—Oh, I recollect. Well, whilst they only make proselytes from that profession, they are heartily welcome to them. She does not mean to make me a convert?

Dick. I believe she has some such design upon me; for she offered me a book of hymns, a shilling, and a dram, to go along with her.

Sir Geo. No bad scheme, Dick. Thou hast a fine, sober, psalm-singing countenance; and when thou hast been some time in their trammels, may'st make as able a teacher as the best of them.

Dick. Laud, sir; I want learning.

Sir Geo. Oh, the spirit, the spirit, will supply all that, Dick, never fear.

Enter Sir WILLIAM, as a German Baron.

My dear baron, what news from the Hay-Market? What says the Florenza? Does she yield? Shall I be happy? Say yes, and command my fortune.

Sir Will. I was never did see so fine a woman since I was leave Hamburgh! dere was all de colour, all red and white, dat was quite natural; point d'artifice. Then she was dance and sing—I vow to Heaven, I was never see de like!

Sir Geo. But how did she receive my embassy?—What hopes?

Sir Will. Why dere was, monsieur le chevalier, when I first enter, dree or four damned queer people; ah, ah, dought I, by gad I guess your business. Dere was one fat big woman's, dat I know long time: le valet de chambre was tell me dat she came from a grand merchand; ha, ha, dought I, by your leave, stick to your shop; or, if you must have de pritty girl, dere is de play-house, dat do very well for you; but for de opera, pardonnez, by gar dat is meat for your master.

Sir Geo. Insolent mechanic!—But she despised him?

Sir Will. Ah, may foy, he is damned rich, has beaucoup de guineas; but after de fat womân was go, I was tell the signora, madam, dere is one certain chevalier of dis country, who has travelled, see de world, bien fait, well made, beaucoup d'esprit, a great deal of monies, who beg, by gar, to have de honour to drow himself at your feet.

Sir Geo. Well, well, baron.

Sir Will. She aska your name; as soon as I tell her, aha, by gar, dans an instant, she melt like de lomp of sugar: she run to her bureau, and, in de minute, return wid de paper.

Sir Geo. Give it me.

[*Reads.*

Les preliminaries d'une traite entre le chevalier Wealthy, et la signora Diamanti.

A bagatelle, a tiffle: she shall have it.

Load. Hark'e, knight, what is all that there outlandish stuff?

Sir Geo. Read, read! The eloquence of angels, my dear baron!

Load. Slam me, but the man's mad! I don't understand their gibberish—What is it in English?

Sir Geo. The preliminaries of a subsidy treaty, between Sir G. Wealthy and Signora Florenza. That the said signora will resign the possession of her person to the said Sir George, on the payment of three hundred guineas monthly, for equipage, table, domestics, dress, dogs, and diamonds; her debts to be duly discharged, and a note advanced of five hundred by way of entrance.

Load. Zounds, what a cormorant! She must be devilish handsome.

Sir Geo. I am told so.

Load. Told so! Why, did you never see her?

Sir Geo. No; and possibly never may, but from my box at the opera.

Load. Hey-day! Why what the devil—

Sir Geo. Ha, ha, you stare, I don't wonder at it. This is an elegant refinement, unknown to the gross voluptuaries of this part of the world. This is, Mr. Loader, what may be called a debt to your dignity: for an opera girl is as essential a piece of equipage for a man of fashion, as his coach.

Load. The devil!

Sir Geo. 'Tis for the vulgar only to enjoy what they possess: the distinction of ranks and conditions are, to have hounds, and never hunt; cooks, and dine at taverns; houses, you never inhabit; mistresses, you never enjoy—

Load. And debts, you never pay. Egad, I am not surprized at it; if this be your trade, no wonder that you want money for necessaries, when you give such a damn'd deal for nothing at all.

Enter Servant.

Serv. Mrs. Cole, to wait upon your honour.

Sir Geo. My dear baron, run, dispatch my affair,

conclude my treaty, and thank her for the very reasonable conditions.

Sir Will. I sall.

Sir Geo. Mr. Loader, shall I trouble you to introduce the lady? She is, I think, your acquaintance.

Load. Who, old Moll? Ay, ay, she's your market-woman. I would not give six pence for your signoras. One armful of good, wholesome British beauty, is worth a ship-load of their trapping, tawdry trollops. But hark'e, baron, how much for the table? Why she must have a devilish large family, or a monstrous stomach.

Sir Will. Ay, ay, dere is her moder, la complaisante to walk in de Park, and to go to de play; two broders, deux valets, dree Spanish lap-dogs, and de monkey.

Load. Strip me, if I would set five shillings against the whole gang. May my partner renounce me with the game in his hand, if I were you, knight, if I would not——

[*Exit Bar.*]

Sir Geo. But the lady waits—[*Exit Load.*]—A strange fellow this! What a whimsical jargon he talks? Not an idea abstracted from play! To say truth, I am sincerely sick of my acquaintance: but, however, I have the first people in the kingdom to keep me in countenance. Death and the dice level all distinctions.

Enter Mrs. COLE, supported by LOADER and DICK.

Mrs. Cole. Gently, gently, good Mr. Loader.

Load. Come along, old Moll. Why, you jade, you look as rosy this morning; I must have a smack at your muns. Here, taste her, she is as good as old hock to get you a stomach.

Mrs. Cole. Fye, Mr. Loader, I thought you had forgot me.

Load. I forget you: I would as soon forget what is trumps.

Mrs. Cole. Softly, softly, young man. There, there, mighty well. And how does your honour do?

I han't seen your honour, I cannt tell the—Oh ! mercy on me, there's a twinge—

Sir Geo. What is the matter, Mrs. Cole?

Mrs. Cole. My old disorder, the rheumatise; I ha'n't been able to get a wink of—Oh la! what, you have been in town these two days?

Sir Geo. Since Wednesday.

Mrs. Cole. And never once called upon old Cole, No, no, I am worn out; thrown by and forgotten, like a tattered garment, as Mr. Squintum says. Oh, he is a dear man! But for him I had been a lost sheep; never known the comforts of the new birth; no.—There's your old friend, Kitty Carrot, at home still. What, shall we see you this evening? I have kept the green room for you ever since I heard you were in town.

Load. What shall we take a snap at old Moll's.—Hey, beldam, have you a good batch of Burgundy abroad?

Mrs. Cole. Bright as a ruby; and for flavour! You know the colonel—He and Jenny Cummins drank three flasks, hand to fist, last night.

Load. What, and bilk thee of thy share?

Mrs. Cole. Ah, don't mention it, Mr. Loader. No, that's all over with me. The time has been, when I could have earned thirty shillings a day by my own drinking, and the next morning was neither sick nor sorry: but now, O laud, a thinbleful turns me topsyturvy.

Load. Poor old girl!

Mrs. Cole. Ay, I have done with these idle vanities; my thoughts are fixed upon a better place. What, I suppose, Mr. Loader, you will be for your old friend, the black-ey'd girl from Rosemary-lane. Ha, ha! Well, 'tis a merry little tit. A thousand pities she's such a reprobate!—But she'll mend; her time is not come: all shall have their call, as Mr. Squintum says, sooner or later; regeneration is not the work of a day. No, no, no—Oh!

Sir Geo. Not worse, I hope?

Mrs. Cole. Rack, rack, gnaw, gnaw, never easy, a-bed or up, all's one. Pray, honest friend, have you any clary, or mint-water in the house?

Dick. A case of French drams.

Mrs. Cole. Heaven defend me! I would not touch a dram for the world.

Sir Geo. They are but cordials, Mrs. Cole. Fetch them, you blockhead. [Exit Dick.

Mrs. Cole. Ay, I am a going; a wasting and a wasting, Sir George. What will become of the house when I am gone, Heaven knows.—No.—When people are missed, then they are mourned. Sixteen years have I lived in the Garden, comfortably and creditably; and, though I say it, could have got bail any hour of the day: reputable tradesmen, Sir George, neighbours, Mr. Loader knows; no knock-me-down doings in my house. A set of regular, sedate, sober customers. No rioters. Sixteen, did I say—Ay, eighteen years I have paid scot and lot in the parish of St. Paul's, and during the whole time nobody have said, Mrs. Cole, why do you so? unless twice that I was before Sir Thomas de Val, and three times in the round-house.

Sir Geo. Nay, don't weep, Mrs. Cole.

Load. May I lose deal, with an honour at bottom, if old Moll does not bring tears into my eyes.

Mrs. Cole. However, it is a comfort after all, to think one has pass'd through the world with credit and character. Ay, a good name, as Mr. Squintum says, is better than a gallipot of ointment.

Enter DICK, with a Dram.

Load. Come, haste, Dick, haste; sorrow is dry. Here, Moll, shall I fill thee a bumper?

Mrs. Cole. Hold, hold, Mr. Loader! Heaven help you, I could as soon swallow the Thames. Only a sip, to keep the gout out of my stomach.

Load. Why then, here's to thee.—Levant me, but it is supernaculum.—Speak when you have enough.

Mrs. Cole. I won't trouble you for the glass; my

hands do so tremble and shake, I shall but spill the good creature.

Load. Well pulled. But now to business. Pr'ythee, Moll, did not I see a tight young wench in a linen gown knock at your door this morning?

Mrs. Cole. Ay, a young thing from the country.

Load. Could we not get a peep at her this evening?

Mrs. Cole. Impossible! She is engaged to Sir Timothy Totter. I have taken earnest for her these three months.

Load. Pho, what signifies such a fellow as that! Tip him an old trader, and give her to the knight.

Mrs. Cole. Tip him an old trader!—Mercy on us, where do you expect to go when you die, Mr. Loader?

Load. Crop me, but this Squintum has turned her brains.

Sir Geo. Nay, Mr. Loader, I think the gentleman has wrought a most happy reformation.

Mrs. Cole. Oh, it was a wonderful work. There had I been tossing in a sea of sin, without rudder or compass. And had not the good gentleman piloted me into the harbour of grace, I must have struck against the rocks of reprobation, and have been quite swallowed up in the whirlpool of despair. He was the precious instrument of my spiritual sprinkling.—But however, Sir George, if your mind be set upon a young country thing, to-morrow night I believe I can furnish you.

Load. As how?

Mrs. Cole. I have advertised this morning in the register-office for servants under seventeen; and ten to one but I light on something that will do.

Load. Pillory me, but it has a face.

Mrs. Cole. Truly, consistently with my conscience, I would do any thing for your honour.

Sir Geo. Right, Mrs. Cole, never lose sight of that monitor. But pray, how long has this heavenly change been wrought in you?

Mrs. Cole. Ever since my last visitation of the gout.

Upon my first fit, seven years ago, I began to have my doubts and my waverings; but I was lost in a labyrinth, and nobody to shew me the road. One time I thought of dying a Roman, which is truly a comfortable communion enough for one of us; but it would not do.

Sir Geo. Why not?

Mrs. Cole. I went one summer over to Boulogne to repent: and, would you believe it, the bare-footed, bald pate beggars would not give me absolution without I quitted my business—Did you ever hear of such a set of scabby—Besides, I could not bear their barbarity. Would you believe it, Mr. Loader, they lock up for their lives in a nunnery, the prettiest, sweetest, tender, young things!—Oh, six of them for a season would finish my business here, and then I should have nothing to do but to think of hereafter.

Load. Brand me, what a country!

Sir Geo. Oh, scandalous!

Mrs. Cole. O no, it would not do. So, in my last illness, I was wished to Mr. Squintum, who stept in with his saving grace, got me with the new-birth, and I became as you see, regenerate, and another creature.

Enter Dick.

Dick. Mr. Transfer, sir, has sent to know if your honour be at home.

Sir Geo. Mrs. Cole, I am mortified to part with you. But business, you know—

Mrs. Cole. True, Sir George, Mr. Loader, your arm—Gently, oh, oh!

Sir Geo. Would you take another thimbleful, Mrs. Cole?

Mrs. Cole. Not a drop—I shall see you this evening?

Sir Geo. Depend upon me.

Mrs. Cole. To-morrow I hope to suit you—We are to have at the Tabernacle an occasional hymn, with a thanksgiving sermon for my recovery. After

which, I shall call at the register-office, and see what goods my advertisement has brought in.

Sir Geo. Extremely obliged to you, Mrs. Cole.

Mrs. Cole. Or if that should not do, I have a tid-bit at home will suit your stomach. Never brushed by a beard. Well, Heaven bless you—Softly, have a care, Mr. Loader—Richard, you may as well give me the bottle into the chair, for fear I should be taken ill on the road. Gently—so, so!

[*Exeunt Mrs. Cole and Loader.*

Sir Geo. Dick, shew Mr. Transfer in. [*Exit Dick.*]
—Ha, ha, what a hodge podge! How the jade has tumbled together the carnal and the spiritual; with what ease she reconciles her new birth to her old calling!—No wonder these preachers have plenty of proselytes, whilst they have the address so comfortably to blend the hitherto jarring interests of the two worlds.

Enter LOADER.

Load. Well, knight, I have housed her; but they want you within, sir.

Sir Geo. I'll go to them immediately.

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter DICK, introducing TRANSFER.

Dick. MY master will come to you presently.

Enter Sir GEORGE.

Sir Geo. Mr. Transfer, your servant.

Trans. Your honour's very humble. I thought to have found Mr. Loader here.

Sir Geo. He will return immediately. Well, Mr. Transfer—but take a chair—you have had a long walk. Mr. Loader, I presume, opened to you the urgency of my business.

Trans. Ay, ay, the general cry, money, money! I don't know, for my part, where all the money is flown to. Formerly a note, with a tolerable en-

dorsement, was as current as cash. If your uncle Richard now would join in this security——

Sir Geo. Impossible.

Trans. Ay, like enough. I wish you were of age.

Sir Geo. So do I. But as that will be considered in the premium——

Trans. True, true——I see you understand business——And what sum does your honour lack at present?

Sir Geo. Lack!——How much have you brought?

Trans. Who, I? Dear me! none.

Sir Geo. Zounds, none!

Trans. Lack-a-day, none to be had, I think. All the morning have I been upon the hunt. There's Ephraim Barebones, the tallow-chandler, in Thames-street, used to be a never-failing chap; not a guinea to be got there. Then I tottered away to Nebuchadnezzar Zebulon in the Old Jewry; but it happened to be Saturday, and they never touch on the Sabbath, you know.

Sir Geo. Why what the devil can I do?

Trans. Good me, I did not know your honour had been so pressed.

Sir Geo. My honour pressed! Yes, my honour is not only pressed, but ruined, unless I can raise money to redeem it. That blockhead Loader, to depend upon this old doating——

Trans. Well, well, now I declare I am quite sorry to see your honour in such a taking.

Sir Geo. Damn your sorrow.

Trans. But come, don't be cast down: though money is not to be had, money's worth may, and that's the same thing.

Sir Geo. How, dear Transfer?

Trans. Why I have at my warehouse in the city, ten casks of whale-blubber, a large cargo of Dantzic dowlas, with a curious sortment of Birmingham hafs, and Witney blankets for exportation.

Sir Geo. Hey!

Trans. And stay, stay, then again at my country-

house, the bottom of Gray's-inn-lane, there's a hundred ton of fine old hay, only damaged a little last winter for want of thatching; with forty load of flint stones.

Sir Geo. Well.

Trans. Your honour may have all these for a reasonable profit, and convert them into cash.

Sir Geo. Blubber and blankets! Why, you old rascal, do you banter me?

Trans. Who, I? O law, marry, Heaven forbid.

Sir Geo. Get out of my—you stuttering scoundrel.

Trans. If your honour would but hear me—

Sir Geo. Troop; I say, unless you have a mind to go a shorter way than you came. [*Exit Trans.*] And yet there is something so uncommonly ridiculous, in his proposal, that were my mind more at ease—

Enter LOADER.

So, sir, you have recommended me to a fine fellow.

Load. What's the matter?

Sir Geo. He cannot supply me with a shilling; and wants besides, to make me a dealer in dowlas.

Load. Ay, and a very good commodity too. People that are upon ways and means, must not be nice, knight.—A pretty piece of work you have made here!—Thrown up the cards with the game in your hands.

Sir Geo. Why, pr'ythee, of what use would his—

Load. Use! of every use. Procure you the spankers, my boy. I have a broker, that, in a twinkling, shall take off your bargain.

Sir Geo. Indeed!

Load. Indeed!—Ay, indeed.—You sit down to hazard, and not know the chances! I'll call him back.—Halloo, Transfer.—A pretty, little, busy, bustling—You may travel miles, before you will meet with his match. If there is one pound in the city, he will get it. He creeps like a ferret into their bags, and makes the yellow boys bolt again.

Enter TRANSFER.

Come hither, little Transfer; what, man, our Minor

was a little too hasty ; he did not understand trap : knows nothing of the game, my dear.

Trans. What I said was to serve Sir George ; as he seemed——

Load. I told him so ; well, well, we will take thy commodities, were they as many more. But try, pr'ythee, if thou couldst not procure us some of the ready for present spending.

Trans. Let me consider.

Load. Ay, do, come : shuffle thy brains ; never fear the baronet. To let a lord of lands want shiners ; 'tis a shame.

Trans. I do recollect, in this quarter of the town, an old friend, that used to do things in this way.

Load. Who ?

Trans. Statute, the scrivener.

Load. Slam me, but he has nicked the chance.

Trans. A hard man, master Loader !

Sir Geo. No matter.

Trans. His demands are exorbitant.

Sir Geo. That is no fault of ours.

Load. Well said, knight !

Trans. But, to save time, I had better mention his terms.

Load. Unnecessary.

Trans. Five per cent legal interest.

Sir Geo. He shall have it.

Trans. Ten, the premium.

Sir Geo. No more words.

Trans. Then, as you are not of age, five more for insuring your life.

Load. We will give it.

Trans. As for what he will demand for the risque——

Sir Geo. He shall be satisfied.

Trans. You pay the attorney.

Sir Geo. Amply, amply ; Loader, dispatch him.

Load. There, there, little Transfer ; now every thing is settled. All things shall be complied with, reasonable or unreasonable. What, our principal is a man of honour. [*Exit Trans.*] Hey, my knight,

this is doing business. This pinch is a sure card.

Re-enter TRANSFER.

Trans. I had forgot one thing. I am not the principal; you pay the brokerage.

Load. Ay, ay; and a handsome present into the bargain, never fear.

Trans. Enough, enough.

Load. Hark'e, Transfer, we'll take the Birmingham hafts and Witney wares.

Trans. They shall be forthcoming.—You would not have the hay with the flints?

Load. Every pebble of 'em. The magistrates of the baronet's borough are infirm and gouty. He shall deal them as new pavement. [*Exit Trans.*] So, that's settled. I believe, knight, I can lend you a helping hand as to the last article. I know some traders that will truck: fellows with finery, not commodities of such clumsy conveyance as old Transfer's.

Sir Geo. You are obliging.

Load. I'll do it, boy; and get you into the bargain, a bonny auctioneer, that shall dispose of them all in a crack. [*Exit.*]

Enter DICK.

Dick. Your uncle, sir, has been waiting some time.

Sir Geo. He comes in a lucky hour, Shew him in. [*Exit Dick.*] Now for a lecture. My situation sha'n't sink my spirits, however.—Here comes the musty trader, running over with remonstrances. I must banter the cit.

Enter RICHARD WEALTHY.

R. Weal. So, sir, what, I suppose, this is a spice of your foreign breeding, to let your uncle kick his heels in your hall, whilst your presence chamber is crowded with pimps, bawds, and gamesters.

Sir Geo. Oh, a proof of my respect, dear nuncle.—Would it have been decent now, nuncle, to have introduced you into such company?

R. Weal. Wonderfully considerate!—Well, young

man, and what do you think will be the end of all this? Here I have received by the last mail, a quire of your draughts from abroad. I see you are determined our neighbours should taste of your magnificence.

Sir Geo. Yes, I think I did some credit to my country.

R. Weal. And how are these to be paid?

Sir Geo. That I submit to you, dear nuncle.

R. Weal. From me!—Not a souze to keep you from the counter.

Sir Geo. Why then let the scoundrels stay. It is their duty. I have other demands, debts of honour, which must be discharged.

R. Weal. Here's a diabolical distinction! Here's a prostitution of words!—Honour!—'Sdeath, that a rascal, who has picked your pocket, shall have his crime gilded with the most sacred distinction, and his plunder punctually paid, whilst the industrious mechanic, who ministers to your very wants, shall have his debt delayed, and his demand treated as insolent.

Sir Geo. Oh! a truce to this thread-bare trumpery, dear nuncle.

R. Weal. I confess my folly; but make yourself easy; you won't be troubled with many more of my visits. I own I was weak enough to design a short expostulation with you; but as we in the city know the true value of time, I shall take care not to squander away any more of it upon you.

Sir Geo. A prudent resolution.

R. Weal. One commission, however, I cannot dispense with myself from executing—It was agreed between your father and me, that as he had but one son, and I one daughter—

Sir Geo. Your gettings should be added to his estate, and my cousin Margery and I squat down together in the comfortable state of matrimony.

R. Weal. Puppy! Such was our intencion. Now his last will claims this contract.

Sir Geo. Dispatch, dear nuncle.

R. Weal. Why then, in a word, see me here to demand the execution.

Sir Geo. What d'ye mean?—For me to marry Margery?

R. Weal. I do.

Sir Geo. What, moi-me?

R. Weal. You, you—Your answer, ay or no?

Sir Geo. Why then, concisely and briefly, without evasion, equivocation, or further circumlocution, —No.

R. Weal. I am glad of it.

Sir Geo. So am I.

R. Weal. But pray, if it would not be too great a favour, what objections can you have to my daughter? Not that I want to remove 'em, but merely out of curiosity—What objections?

Sir Geo. None. I neither know her, have seen her, enquired after her, or ever intend it.

R. Weal. What, perhaps, I am the stumbling block?

Sir Geo. You have hit it.

R. Weal. Ay, now we come to the point. Well, and pray—

Sir Geo. Why, it is not so much a dislike to your person, though that is exceptionable enough, but your profession, dear nuncle, is an insuperable obstacle.

R. Weal. Good lack!—And what harm has that done, pray?

Sir Geo. Done!—So stained, polluted, and tainted the whole mass of your blood, thrown such a blot on your 'scutcheon, as ten regular successions can hardly efface.

R. Weal. The deuce!

Sir Geo. And could you now, consistently with your duty as a faithful guardian, recommend my union with the daughter of a trader?

R. Weal. Why, indeed, I ask pardon; I am afraid I did not weigh the matter as maturely as I ought.

Sir Geo. Oh, a horrid, barbarous scheme!

R. Weal. But then I thought her having the honour to partake of the same flesh and blood with yourself, might prove in some measure a kind of fullers' earth, to scour out the dirty spots contracted by commerce.

Sir Geo. Impossible!

R. Weal. Besides, here it has been the practice even of peers.

Sir Geo. Don't mention the unnatural intercourse! Thank Heaven, Mr. Richard Wealthy, my education has been in another country, where I have been too well instructed in the value of nobility, to think of intermixing it with the offspring of a Bourgeois. Why, what apology could I make to my children, for giving them such a mother?

R. Weal. I did not think of that. Then I must despair, I am afraid.

Sir Geo. I can afford but little hopes.—Though, upon recollection—Is the Grisette pretty?

R. Weal. A parent may be partial. She is thought so.

Sir Geo. Ah, *la jolie petite Bourgeoise*! Poor girl, I sincerely pity her. And I suppose, to procure her emersion from the mercantile mud, no consideration would be spared.

R. Weal. Why, to be sure, for such an honour, one would strain a point.

Sir Geo. Why then, not totally to destroy your hopes, I do recollect an edict in favour of Brittany, that when a man of distinction engages in commerce his nobility is suffered to sleep.

R. Weal. Indeed!

Sir Geo. And upon his quitting the contagious connexion, he is permitted to resume his rank.

R. Weal. That's fortunate.

Sir Geo. So, uncle Richard, if you will sell out of the stocks, shut up your counting house, and quit St. Mary Axe for Grosvenor Square—

R. Weal. What then?

Sir Geo. Why, when your rank has had time to rouse itself, (for I think your nobility, nuncle, has had a pretty long nap) if the girl's person is pleasing, and the purchase money is adequate to the honour, I may in time be prevailed upon to restore her to the right of her family.

R. Weal. Amazing condescension !

Sir Geo. Good nature is my foible. But, upon my soul, I would not have gone so far for any body else.

R. Weal. I can contain no longer. Hear me, spendthrift, prodigal, do you know, that in ten days your whole revenue won't purchase you a feather to adorn your empty head?—

Sir Geo. Hey-day, what's the matter now?

R. Weal. And that you derive every acre of your boasted patrimony from your great uncle, a soap-boiler!

Sir Geo. Infamous aspersion !

R. Weal. It was his bags, the fruits of his honest industry, that preserved your lazy beggarly nobility. His wealth repaired your tottering hall, from the ruins of which even the rats had run.

Sir Geo. Better our name had perished ! Insupportable ! soap-boiling uncle !

R. Weal. Traduce a trader in a country of commerce ! It is treason against the community ; and, for your punishment, I would have you restored to the sordid condition from whence we drew you, and, like your predecessors, the Picts, stript, painted, and fed upon hips, haws, and blackberries.

Sir Geo. A truce, dear haberdasher.

R. Weal. One pleasure I have, that to this goal you are upon the gallop ; but have a care, the sword hangs but by a thread. When next we meet, know me for the master of your fate. [Exit.

Sir Geo. Insolent mechanic ! But that his Bourgeois blood would have soil'd my sword—

Enter Sir WILLIAM and LOADER.

Sir Will. What is de matter ?

Sir Geo. A fellow here, upon the credit of a little

affinity, has dared to upbraid me with being sprung from a soap-boiler.

Sir Will. Vat, you from the boiler of soap?

Sir Geo. Me.

Sir Will. Aha, begar, dat is anoder ting.—And harka you, mister monsieur, ha—how dare a you have d'affrontary—

Sir Geo. How!

Sir Will. De impertinence to sit down, play wid me?

Sir Geo. What is this?

Sir Will. A beggarly Bourgeois vis-a-vis a baron of twenty descents.

Load. But, baron—

Sir Will. Bygar, I am almost ashamed to win of such a low, dirty—Give me my monies, and let me never see your face.

Load. Why, but, baron, you mistake this thing; I know the old buck this fellow prates about.

Sir Will. May be.

Load. Pigeon me, as true a gentleman as the grand signior. He was, indeed, a good-natured, obliging, friendly fellow; and being a great judge of soap, tar, and train-oil, he used to have it home to his house, and sell it to his acquaintance for ready money, to serve them.

Sir Will. Was dat all?

Load. Upon my honour.

Sir Will. Oh, dat, dat is anoder ting. Bygar I was afraid he was negotiant.

Load. Nothing like it.

Enter DICK.

Dick. A gentleman to enquire for Mr. Loader.

Load. I come.—A pretty son of a bitch, this baron! pimps for the man, picks his pocket, and then wants to kick him out of company, because his uncle was an oilman. [Exit.]

Sir Will. I beg pardon, chevalier, I was mistake.

Sir Geo. Oh, don't mention it: had the slam been fact, your behaviour was natural enough.

Enter **LOADER**.

Load. Mr. Smirk, the auctioneer.

Sir Geo. Shew him in, by all means. [*Exit* **Load.**]

Sir Will. You have affair.

Sir Geo. If you'll walk into the next room, they will be finished in five minutes.

Enter **LOADER**, with **SHIFT** as **SMIRK**.

Load. Here, master Smirk, this is the gentleman. Hark'e, knight, did I not tell you, old Moll was your mark? Here she has brought a pretty piece of man's meat already; as sweet as a nosegay, and as ripe as a cherry, you rogue. Dispatch him, mean time we'll manage the girl. [*Exit.*]

Smirk. You are the principal.

Sir Geo. Even so. I have, Mr. Smirk, some things of a considerable value, which I want to dispose of immediately.

Smirk. You have?

Sir Geo. Could you assist me?

Smirk. Doubtless.

Sir Geo. But directly?

Smirk. We have an auction at twelve. I'll add your cargo to the catalogue.

Sir Geo. Can that be done?

Smirk. Every day's practice: it is for the credit of the sale. Last week, amongst the valuable effects of a gentleman going abroad, I sold a choice collection of china, with a curious service of plate; though the real party was never master of above two delft dishes, and a dozen of pewter, in all his life.

Sir Geo. Very artificial. But this must be concealed.

Smirk. Buried here. Oh, many an aigrette and solitaire have I sold, to discharge a lady's play-debt. But then we must know the parties; otherwise it might be knock'd down to the husband himself. Ha, ha—Hey ho!

Sir Geo. True. Upon my word, your profession requires parts.

Smirk. No body's more. Did you ever hear, Sir George, what first brought me into the business?

Sir Geo. Never.

Smirk. Quite an accident, as I may say. You must have known my predecessor, Mr. Prig, the greatest man in the world in his way, ay, or that ever was, or ever will be; quite a jewel of a man; he would touch you up a lot; there was no resisting him. He would force you to bid, whether you would or no. I shall never see his equal.

Sir Geo. You are modest, Mr. Smirk.

Smirk. No, no, but his shadow. Far be it from me, to vie with great men. But as I was saying, my predecessor, Mr. Prig, was to have a sale as it might be on a Saturday. On Friday at noon, I shall never forget the day, he was suddenly seized with a violent cholic. He sent for me to his bed-side, squeezed me by the hand; Dear Smirk, said he, what an accident! You know what is to-morrow; the greatest shew this season; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minionettes; all the world will be there; Lady Dy Joss, Mrs. Nankyn, the Duchess of Dupe, and every body at all. You see my state, it will be impossible for me to mount. What can I do?—It was not for me, you know, to advise that great man.

Sir Geo. No, no.

Smirk. At last looking wishfully at me, Smirk, says he, d'you love me?—Mr. Prig, can you doubt it?—I'll put it to the test, says he; supply my place to-morrow.—I, eager to shew my love, rashly and rapidly replied, I will.

Sir Geo. That was bold.

Smirk. Absolute madness. But I had gone too far to recede. Then the point was, to prepare for the awful occasion. The first want that occurred to me, was a wig; but this was too material an article to depend on my own judgment. I resolved to consult my friends; I told them the affair——You hear, gentlemen, what has happened; Mr. Prig, one of the

greatest men in his way, the world ever saw, or ever will, quite a jewel of a man, taken with a violent fit of the colic ; to-morrow the greatest shew this season ; prints, pictures, bronzes, butterflies, medals, and minionettes ; every body in the world to be there ; Lady Dy Joss, Mrs. Nankyn, Duchess of Dupe, and all mankind ; it being impossible he should mount, I have consented to sell—They stared—It is true, gentlemen. Now I should be glad to have your opinions as to a wig. They were divided : some recommended a tye, others a bag : one mentioned a hob, but was soon over-ruled. Now for my part, I own, I rather inclined to the bag ; but to avoid the imputation of rashness, I resolved to take Mrs. Smirk's judgment, my wife, a dear good woman, fine in figure, high in taste, a superior genius, and knows old china like a Nabob.

Sir Geo. What was her decision ?

Smirk. I told her the case—My dear, you know what has happened. My good friend, Mr. Prig, the greatest man in the world, in his way, that ever was, or ever will be, quite a jewel of a man, a violent fit of the colic——the greatest shew this season, to-morrow ; pictures, and every thing in the world : all the world will be there : now, as it is impossible he should, I mount in his stead. You know the importance of a wig : I have asked my friends—some recommended a tye, others a bag—what is your opinion ? Why, to deal freely, Mr. Smirk, says she, a tye for your round, regular, smiling face would be rather too formal, and a bag too boyish, deficient in dignity for the solemn occasion ; were I worthy to advise, you should wear a something between both. I'll be hanged if you don't mean a major. I jumped at the hint, and a major it was.

Sir Geo. So, that was fix'd.

Smirk. Finally. But next day, when I came to mount the rostrum, then was the trial. My limbs shook, and my tongue trembled. The first lot was a chamber-utensil, in Chelsea china, of the pea-green

pattern. It occasioned a great laugh; but I got through it. Her grace, indeed, gave me great encouragement. I over-heard her whisper to Lady Dy, Upon my word, Mr. Smirk does it very well. Very well, indeed Mr. Smirk, addressing herself to me. I made an acknowledging bow to her grace, as in duty bound. But one flower flounced involuntarily from me that day, as I may say. I remember, Dr. Trifle called it enthusiastic, and pronounced it a presage of my future greatness.

Sir Geo. What was that?

Smirk. Why, sir, the lot was a Guido; a single figure, a marvellous fine performance; well preserved, and highly finished. It stuck at five and forty: I, charmed with the picture, and piqued at the people, A going for five and forty, no body more than five and forty?—Pray, ladies and gentlemen, look at this piece, quite flesh and blood, and only wants a touch from the torch of Prometheus, to start from the canvass and fall a bidding. A general plaudit ensued, I bowed, and in three minutes knocked it down at sixty-three, ten.

Sir Geo. That was a stroke at least equal to your master.

Smirk. O dear me! You did not know the great man, alike in every thing. He had as much to say upon a ribbon as a Raphael. His manner was inimitably fine. I remember they took him off at the play-house, some time ago; pleasant, but wrong. Public characters should not be sported with—They are sacred—But we lose time.

Sir Geo. Oh, in the lobby on the table, you will find the particulars.

Smirk. We shall see you, there will be a world of company. I shall please you. But the great nicety of our art is the eye. Mark how mine skims round the room. Some bidders are shy, and only advance with a nod; but I nail them. One, two, three, four, five. You will be surprised—Ha, ha, ha!—Heigh-ho!

[Exit.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter Sir GEORGE, and LOADER.

Sir George. A MOST infernal run. Let's see, [*Pulls out a card.*] Loader a thousand, the baron two, Tally—Enough to beggar a banker. Every shilling of Transfer's supply exhausted! nor will even the sale of my moveables prove sufficient to discharge my debts. Death and the devil! In what a complication of calamities has a few days plunged me! and no resource!

Load. Knight, here's old Moll come to wait on you; she has brought the tid-bit I spoke of. Shall I bid her send her in?

Sir Geo. Pray do.

[*Exit Loader.*]

Enter Mrs. COLE and LUCY.

Mrs. Cole. Come along, Lucy. You'bashful baggage, I thought I had silenced your scruples. Don't you remember what Mr. Squintum said? A woman's not worth saving, that won't be guilty of a swinging sin; for then they have matter to repent upon. Here, your honour, I leave her to your management. She is young, tender, and timid; does not know what is for her own good: but your honour will soon teach her. I would willingly stay, but I must not lose the lecture.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Geo. Upon my credit, a fine figure! Awkward—Can't produce her publicly as mine; but she will do for private amusement—Will you be seated, miss?—Dumb? quite a picture! she too wants a touch of the Promethean torch—Will you be so kind, ma'am, to walk from your frame and take a chair?—Come, pr'ythee, why so coy? Nay, I am not very adroit in the custom of this country. I suppose I must conduct you—Come, miss.

Lucy. O, sir.

Sir Geo. Child!

Lucy. If you have any humanity, spare me.

Sir Geo. In tears! what can this mean? Artifice. A project to raise the price, I suppose. Look'e, my

dear, you may save this piece of pathetic for another occasion. It won't do with me; I am no novice—So, child, a truce to your tragedy, I beg.

Lucy. Indeed you wrong me, sir; indeed you do.

Sir Geo. Wrong you! how came you here, and for what purpose.

Lucy. A shameful one. I know it all, and yet believe me, sir, I am innocent.

Sir Geo. Oh, I don't question that. Your pious patroness is a proof of your innocence.

Lucy. What can I say to gain your credit? And yet, sir, strong as appearances are against me, by all that's holy, you see me here, a poor distress involuntary victim.

Sir Geo. Her style's above the common class; her tears are real.—Rise, child.—How the poor creature trembles!

Lucy. Say then I am safe.

Sir Geo. Fear nothing.

Lucy. May Heaven reward you. I cannot.

Sir Geo. Pr'ythee, child, collect yourself, and help me to unravel this mystery. You came hither willingly? There was no force?

Lucy. None.

Sir Geo. You know Mrs. Cole.

Lucy. Too well.

Sir Geo. How came you then to trust her?

Lucy. Mine, sir, is a tedious, melancholy tale.

Sir Geo. And artless too?

Lucy. As innocence.

Sir Geo. Give it me.

Lucy. It will tire you.

Sir Geo. Not if it be true. Be just, and you will find me generous.

Lucy. On that, sir, I relied in venturing hither.

Sir Geo. You did me justice. Trust me with all your story. If you deserve, depend upon my protection.

Lucy. Some months ago, sir, I was considered as the joint heiress of a respectable wealthy merchant;

dear to my friends, happy in my prospects, and my father's favourite.

Sir Geo. His name.

Lucy. There you must pardon me. Unkind and cruel though he has been to me; let me discharge the duty of a daughter, suffer in silence, nor bring reproach on him who gave me being.

Sir Geo. I applaud your piety.

Lucy. At this happy period, my father judging an addition of wealth must bring an increase of happiness, resolved to unite me with a man sordid in his mind, brutal in his manners, and riches his only commendation. My refusal of this ill-suited match, though mildly given, inflamed my father's temper, naturally choleric, alienated his affections, and banished me his house, distrest and destitute.

Sir Geo. Would no friend receive you?

Lucy. Alas, how few are friends to the unfortunate! Besides, I knew, sir, such a step would be considered by my father as an appeal from his justice. I therefore retired to a remote corner of the town, trusting, as my only advocate, to the tender calls of nature in his cool reflecting hours.

Sir Geo. How came you to know this woman?

Lucy. Accident placed me in a house, the mistress of which professed the same principles with my infamous conductress. There, as enthusiasm is the child of melancholy, I caught the infection. A constant attendance on their assemblies procured me the acquaintance of this woman, whose extraordinary zeal and devotion first drew my attention and confidence. I trusted her with my story, and in return, received the warmest invitation to take the protection of her house. This I unfortunately accepted.

Sir Geo. Unfortunately indeed!

Lucy. By the decency of appearances, I was some time imposed upon. But an accident, which you will excuse my repeating, revealed all the horror of my situation. I will not trouble you with a recital of all the arts used to seduce me: happily they hitherto

have failed. But this morning I was acquainted with my destiny; and no other election left me, but immediate compliance or a jail. In this desperate condition, you cannot wonder, sir, at my choosing rather to rely on the generosity of a gentleman, than the humanity of a creature insensible to pity, and void of every virtue.

Sir Geo. The event shall justify your choice. You have my faith and honour for your security. For though I cannot boast of my own goodness, yet I have an honest feeling for afflicted virtue; and, however unfashionable, a spirit that dares afford it protection. Give me your hand. As soon as I have dispatched some pressing business here, I will lodge you in an asylum, sacred to the distresses of your sex; where indigent beauty is guarded from temptations, and deluded innocence rescued from infamy.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter SHIFT.

Shift. Zooks, I have toiled like a horse; quite tired, by Jupiter. And what shall I get for my pains? The old fellow here talks of making me easy for life. Easy! And what does he mean by easy? He'll make me an exciseman, I suppose; and so with an ink-horn at my button hole, and a taper switch in my hand, I shall run about gauging of beer-barrels. No, that will never do. This lad here is no fool. Foppish, indeed. He does not want parts, no, nor principles neither. I overheard his scene with the girl. I think I may trust him. I have a great mind to venture it. It is a shame to have him duped by this old don. It must not be, I'll in and unfold—— Ha!—Egad, I have a thought too, which, if my heir apparent can execute, I shall still lie concealed, and perhaps be rewarded on both sides.

*I have it,—'tis engender'd, piping hot,
And now, Sir Knight, I'll match you with a plot.*

[*Exit.*

Enter Sir WILLIAM and RICHARD WEALTHY.

R. Wal. Well, I suppose by this time you are sa-

tified what a scoundrel you have brought into the world, and are ready to finish your foolery.

Sir Will. Got to the catastrophe, good brother.

R. Weal. Let us have it over then.

Sir Will. I have already alarmed all his tradesmen. I suppose we shall soon have him here, with a legion of bailiffs and constables.—Oh, you have my will about you?

R. Weal. Yes; yes.

Sir Will. It is almost time to produce it, or read him the clause that relates to his rejecting your daughter. That will do his business. But they come. I must return to my character.

Enter SHIFT.

Shift. Sir, sir, we are all in the wrong box; our scheme is blown up; your son has detected Loader and Tally, and is playing the very devil within.

Sir Will. Oh, the bunglers!

Shift. Now for it, youngster.

Enter Sir GEORGE, driving in LOADER and another.

Sir Geo. Rascals, robbers, that, like the locust, mark the road you have taken, by the ruin and desolation you leave behind you.

Load. Sir George!

Sir Geo. And can youth, however cautious, be guarded against such deep-laid, complicated villainy? Where are the rest of your diabolical crew? your auctioneer, usurer, and——O sir, are you here?——I am glad you have not escaped us, however.

Sir Will. What de devil is de matter?

Sir Geo. Your birth, which I believe an imposition, preserves you, however, from the discipline those rogues have received. A baron, a nobleman, a sharper! O shame! It is enough to banish all confidence from the world. On whose faith can we rely, when those, whose honour is held as sacred as an oath, unmindful of their dignity, descend to rival pick-pockets in their infamous arts. What are these [*Pulls out dice.*] pretty implements? The fruits of your leisure hours! They are dexterously done. You

have a fine mechanical turn.—Dick, secure the door.

Mrs. Cole, speaking as entering.

Mrs. Cole. Here I am, at last. Well, and how is your honour, and the little gentlewoman?—Bless me? what is the matter here?

Sir Geo. I am, madam, treating your friends with a cold collation, and you are opportunely come for your share. The little gentlewoman is safe, and in much better hands than you designed her. Abominable hypocrite! who, tottering under the load of irreverent age and infamous diseases, inflexibly proceed in the practice of every vice, impiously prostituting the most sacred institutions to the most infernal purposes.

Mrs. Cole. I hope your honour—

Sir Geo. Take her away. As you have been singular in your penitence, you ought to be distinguished in your penance; which, I promise you, shall be most publicly and plentifully bestowed.

[*Exit Mrs. Cole.*

Enter Dick.

Dick. The constables, sir.

Sir Geo. Let them come in, that I may consign these gentlemen to their care. [*To Sir Will.*] Your letters of nobility you will produce in a court of justice. Though, if I read you right, you are one of those indigent, itinerant nobles of your own creation, which our reputation for hospitality draws hither in shoals, to the shame of our understanding, the impairing of our fortunes, and, when you are trusted, the betraying of our designs. Officers, do your duty.

Sir Will. Why, don't you know me?

Sir Geo. Just as I guessed. An impostor. He has recovered the free use of his tongue already.

Sir Will. Nay, but George—

Sir Geo. Insolent familiarity! away with him.

Sir Will. Hold, hold, a moment. Brother Richard, set this matter to rights.

R. Weal. Don't you know him.

Sir Geo. Know him! The very question is an affront.

R. Weal. Nay, I don't wonder at it. 'Tis your father, you fool.

Sir Geo. My father! Impossible!

Sir Will. That may be, but 'tis true.

Sir Geo. My father alive! Thus let me greet the blessing.

Sir Will. Alive! Ay, and I believe I sha'n't be in a hurry to die again.

Sir Geo. But, dear sir, the report of your death—and this disguise—to what—

Sir Will. Don't ask any questions. Your uncle will tell you all. For my part, I am sick of the scheme.

R. Weal. I told you what would come of your politics.

Sir Will. You did so. But if it had not been for those clumsy scoundrels, the plot was as good a plot—O, George! such discoveries I have to make.—Within I'll unravel the whole.

Sir Geo. Perhaps, sir, I may match 'em.

Shift. Sir. [*Pulls him by the sleeve.*]

Sir Geo. Never fear. It is impossible, gentlemen, to determine your fate, till this matter is more fully explained; till when, keep 'em in safe custody.—Do you know them, sir?

Sir Will. Yes, but that's more than they did me. I can cancel your debts there, and, I believe, prevail on those gentlemen to refund too—But you have been a sad profligate young dog, George.

Sir Geo. I can't boast of my goodness, sir; but I think I could produce you a proof, that I am not so totally destitute of—

Sir Will. Ay! why then pr'ythee do.

Sir Geo. I have, sir, this day, resisted a temptation that greater pretenders to morality might have yielded to. But I will trust myself no longer, and must crave your interposition and protection,

Sir Will. To what?

Sir Geo. I will attend you with the explanation in an instant.

[*Exit.*]

Sir Will. Pr'ythee, Shift, what does he mean?

Shift. I believe I can guess.

Sir Will. Let us have it.

Shift. I suppose the affair I overheard just now, a prodigious fine elegant girl, faith, that, discarded by her family for refusing to marry her grandfather, fell into the hands of the venerable lady you saw, who being the kind caterer for your son's amusements, brought her hither for a purpose obvious enough—But the young gentleman, touched with her story, truth, and tears, was converted from the spoiler of her honour to the protector of her innocence.

Sir Will. Look'e there, brother, did I not tell you that George was not so bad at the bottom?

R. Weal. This does indeed atone for half the—
But they are here.

Enter Sir GEORGE and LUCY.

Sir Geo. Fear nothing, madam; you may safely rely on the—

Lucy. My father!

R. Weal. Lucy!

Lucy. O, sir, can you forgive your poor distressed unhappy girl? You scarce can guess how hardly I've been used, since my banishment from your paternal roof. Want; pining want, anguish, and shame, have been my constant partners.

Sir Will. Brother!

Sir Geo. Sir!

Lucy. Father!

R. Weal. Rise, child, 'tis I must ask thee forgiveness. Canst thou forget the woes I've made thee suffer? Come to my arms once more, thou darling of my age.—What mischief had my rashness nearly completed. Nephew, I scarce can thank you as I ought, but—

Sir Geo. I am richly paid in being the happy instrument—Yet might I urge a wish—

R. Weal. Name it.

Sir Geo. That you would forgive my follies of to-day; and, as I have been providentially the occasional guardian of your daughter's honour, that you would bestow on me that right for life.

R. Weal. That must depend on Lucy; her will, not mine, shall now direct her choice—What says your father?

Sir Will. Me! Oh, I'll shew you in an instant.—Give me your hands. There children, now you are joined, and the devil take him that wishes to part you.

Sir Geo. I thank you for us both.

R. Weal. May happiness attend you.

Sir Will. Now, brother, I hope you will allow me to be a good plotter. All this was brought to bear by my means.

Shift. With my assistance, I hope you'll own, sir.

Sir Will. That's true, honest Shift, and thou shalt be richly rewarded; nay, George shall be your friend too. This Shift is an ingenious fellow, let me tell you, son.

Sir Geo. I am no stranger to his abilities, sir. But, if you please, we will retire. The various struggles of this fair sufferer require the soothing softness of a sister's love. And now, sir, I hope your fears for me are over; for had I not this motive to restrain my follies, yet I now know the town too well to be ever its bubble, and will take care to preserve, at least,

*Some more estate, and principles, and wit,
Than brokers, bawds, and gamesters shall think fit.*

SHIFT addressing himself to Sir GEORGE.

And what becomes of your poor servant Shift!

Your father talks of lending me a lift—

A great man's promise, when its turn is serv'd!

Cupons on promises wou'd soon be starv'd:

No, on myself alone I now rely:

'Gad I've a thriving traffic in my eye—

*Near the mad mansions of Moorfields I'll bawl;
Friends, fathers, mothers, sisters, sons, and all,
Shut up your shops, and listen to my call.*

With labour, toil, all second means dispense.

And live a rent-charge upon Providence.

Prick up your ears; a story now I'll tell.

Which once a widow, and her child besel,

I knew the mother, and her daughter well;

Poor, it is true, they were; but never wanted,

For whatsoe'er they ask'd, was always granted:

One fatal day, the matron's truth was try'd,

She wanted meat and drink, and fairly cry'd.

[Child.] *Mother, you cry!* [Moth.] *Oh, child, I've
got no bread.*

[Child.] *What matters that? Why Providence a'n't
dead!*

With reason good, this truth the child might say,

For there came in at noon, that very day,

Bread, greens, potatoes, and a leg of mutton,

A better sure a table ne'er was put on:

Ay, that might be, ye cry, with those poor souls;

But we ne'er had a rasher for the coals.

And d'ye deserve it? How d'ye spend your days?

In pastimes, prodigality, and plays!

Let's go see Foote! ah, Foote's a precious limb!

Old-Nick will soon a foot-ball make of him!

For foremost rows in side-boxes you shove,

Think you to meet with side-boxes above?

Where gigling girls and powder'd fops may sit,

No, you will all be cramm'd into the pit,

And crowd the house for Satan's benefit.

Oh, what you snivel? Well, do so no more,

Drop, to atone, your money at the door,

And, if I please—I'll give it to the poor.

[Exeunt omnes.]

THE END.

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